

# Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

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## People's Initiative

President Macapagal-Arroyo on Thursday put her cards on the table and endorsed the controversial people's initiative to amend the 1987 Constitution.

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## 'I Do'

The network was stopped momentarily as ABS-CBN star Claudine Barretto and GMA 7 contract artist Raymart Santiago walked down the aisle at the golf course in Tagaytay Highlands on Monday.

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## 'Peace with Muslim rebels this year'

By OLIVER TEVES  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said Thursday she expects a peace pact with Muslim separatist rebels this year, and appealed for international support in rebuilding conflict-stricken communities in the country's south.

Government and Muslim rebel negotiators met recently in Malaysia in the latest round of informal talks to end more than three decades of rebellion,

and agreed to resume discussions early next month, a rebel spokesman said.

"I believe that before the year is out, we would be able to achieve a lasting peace in Mindanao with your support," Arroyo said in a speech at an international donors' meeting in Tagaytay city, south of Manila.

"The last mile is always the hardest sailing because that is when the destination is in sight, but the winds of resistance will blow most fiercely."

PEACE Page 2

EDWARD MAXIMO ELENZANO

## His body is his canvas

By AGNES E. DONATO  
REPORTER

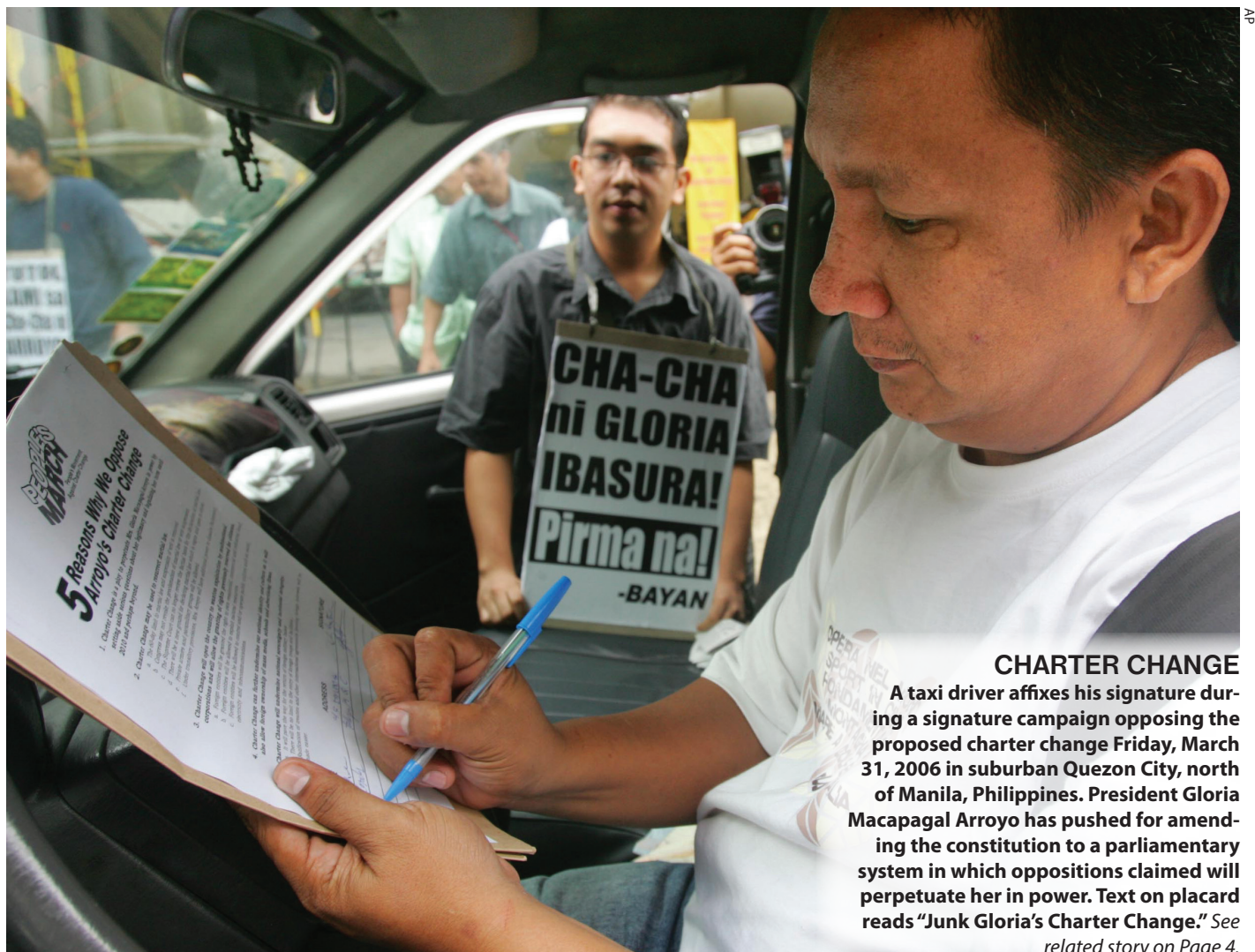
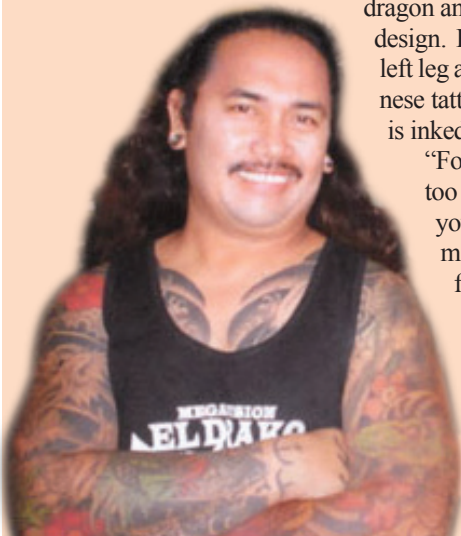
Tattoo artist "Dragon Edong" takes his craft seriously and he has his own skin to prove it.

If you asked Dragon Edong to count the number of tattoos on his skin, he would tell you he's got only one. But it would probably interest you to know that, that one tattoo covers more than half of his body.

Edong's tattoo features at least three different designs. On his back is his award-winning dragon and a Filipino warrior design. His arm, chest, and left leg are adorned by Japanese tattoo art. His right leg is inked with tribal art.

"For me, having a tattoo is like asserting your individuality. It makes you different from others," he says in an interview.

Originally from Quezon City in the  
EDWARD  
Page 2



## CHARTER CHANGE

A taxi driver affixes his signature during a signature campaign opposing the proposed charter change Friday, March 31, 2006 in suburban Quezon City, north of Manila, Philippines. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has pushed for amending the constitution to a parliamentary system in which oppositions claimed will perpetuate her in power. Text on placard reads "Junk Gloria's Charter Change." See related story on Page 4.

## 1st OFW bank for 'world's greatest workers'

By CHRISTINE AVENDANO  
INQUIRER

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday announced plans to establish the first OFW bank as part of government ef-

forts to help overseas Filipino workers remit their earnings conveniently through postal systems here and abroad, and at lower service rates.

The President said the "newest service" was an offering to "our new heroes and greatest workers

in the world," who sent a record high of \$11 billion in remittances to the country last year.

"So that we can help our OFWs in saving and sending their money back home, we will make the Philippine Postal Savings Bank (PPSB) an OFW

bank," she said during a round-table discussion with government officials in Malacañang.

The government-run PPSB will be renamed Philippine Overseas Postal Bank, according to its president Rolando

1ST Page 2

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# PINOYNEWS

## MOVER elects new officers

By **JOHN RAVELO**  
REPORTER

Non-profit group MOVER has installed a new set of officers who will assume their respective offices right after an oath-taking ceremony tentatively slated on April 9.

The new officers will serve one-year terms, said outgoing MOVER president Jun Lapeceros. The group held an election by balloting last Sunday at the Kilili Beach pavilion, where over 100 members participated.

Marites Castillo leads the incoming officers as president. The other elected officers include Gloria Ebbay and Loreto Cabo, vice presidents for internal and external affairs, respectively; and Juanito Cabo, treasurer.

Five executive positions—secretary, assistant treasurer, public relations officer, business manager, and auditor—remain vacant. Lapeceros said no member filed candidacies for those positions.

However, Lapeceros said the group's board will appoint officers to the vacant executive posts. The appointees have yet to be named.

Nancy Zamora leads the board as chairperson. The 15-member board installed William Bagano and Ranulfo Baltazar as vice chair and secretary, respectively.

The other board members include Victoria Ladia, Leonarda Benito, Ben Ebbay, Maria Nenita Brewer, Rogelio Benito, Renato Vergara, Venus Acera, Miles Fernandez, Emelita Fernandez, Marlyn Magtapat, Radino Garcia, and Francisco Flores.

MOVER has over 150 members. Established in 2001 as an organization of Filipino workers in the CNMI, the association has metamorphosed into an environmentalist group, bagging an environmental achievement award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 in 2004. MOVER has been actively involved in various environment cleanup projects.

**1ST**  
FROM PAGE 1

Macasaet. The new OFW bank will be operational in three to six months, he said.

Ms Arroyo said the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) would invest P1 billion in the modernization of the PPSB facilities.

Macasaet proposed the establishment of the OFW bank at Tuesday's Cabinet meeting and this was "approved by Cabinet members," the President said.

The new bank will receive remittances sent by OFWs through postal offices abroad. It will send the money to their loved ones through automated teller machines (ATMs) that it will put up in the 2,000 post offices throughout the country.

In December 2004, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas estimated the total number of OFWs at 4.9 million, including 3.6 million on temporary employment and 1.3 million working without legal documents.

### 'Novel' idea

Macasaet told reporters that the bank's creation was a "novel concept," noting that OFWs currently remit their money through the existing banking system, such as through the Philippine National Bank and Allied Bank, or informal channels.

"So instead of going, say, to a branch of a certain bank, all they have to do is go [to a post office abroad], remit the money and send it here, and we receive it and we have 2,000 post offices here," he said.

"We will be radically different because we will be using the post offices abroad and we'll be using the post offices here," Macasaet said.

He said he planned to talk to Postmaster General Dario Rama so that the new OFW bank could have access to the post offices nationwide.

Negotiations will also be made with postal offices abroad, particularly in the United States, the Middle East and the European Union, to facilitate the remittances of the Filipino workers, he said.

Last year, Macasaet said the OFWs in the United States sent the biggest amount of remittances at \$6 billion, followed by those in the Middle East (\$1.4 billion), Europe (\$1.4 billion)

and Asia (\$1.1 billion).

### Informal channels

Through the new bank, he said, the government intended to corner 20 percent of the amount that the OFWs normally send home through informal channels. Remittances sent this way amount to \$2 billion, he said.

Macasaet said the OFW bank would offer lower service fees, charging 20 to 30 percent less than what the existing banking system collected. At present, banks charge between \$5 and \$20 per remittance.

The new bank will also offer

better foreign exchange rates compared to other banks, he said.

"When an OFW sends money, the rate is \$51. They (banks) give you only P49; we'll probably give them a little more," he said.

Macasaet said the OFW bank would offer other services, such as free e-mail services in the post offices here for the families of migrant workers.

For a "minimal" fee, the families can get in touch with their loved ones through the Voice Over Internet Protocol, a new technology where they can talk with their relatives via the Internet.

### PEACE

FROM PAGE 1

Arroyo said "nothing will be more powerful for the future development of the Philippines than to bring peace, stability and justice to Mindanao," which is regarded as the Filipino Muslim homeland.

She told donors: "Please consider providing your aid now even as we await the signing of a final peace accord as several nations have already done under the Mindanao Trust Fund of the World Bank."

The bank and international donors so far have contributed US\$2.7 million (€2.2 million) and promised US\$50 million (€41 million) more after a peace agreement is signed.

Now, his fellow artists would rather have Edong serve as judge. His latest victory occurred at the World Tattoo Arts Festival and Exhibition held in Bangkok, Thailand on Feb. 10-12, 2006.

As a Philippine representative, Edong bagged the award for "Best Dragon" design, using his body as a canvas. He beat artists from the United States, Japan, Italy, Russia, Australia, Singapore, New Zealand, China, Austria, The Netherlands, France, Belgium, Malaysia, Finland, Denmark, Germany, and Thailand.

Edong related in a recent press release that he and his nephew Alpog planned his winning piece one month before the competition. For five straight days, he endured the pain of needle to skin to bring their vision to fruition.

He also served as one of the judges in the Best Creation category during the Bangkok event. Given his achievements, however, tattooing is far from becoming the end-all, be-all of Edong's existence.

He is also an active member of the Dekada movement, a group of long-time CNMI nonresidents pushing for permanent residency in the Commonwealth.

Although he claims to be not much of a singer, Edong can be seen at Mount Carmel Cathedral rehearsing with the Glory Dei Choir every Friday and singing with the group during the Sunday Tagalog mass.

Indeed, Edong is a walking disclaimer to the notion that tattooed people are never up to any good.

"I really hope people will be more open-minded about tattoos. Tattooing is a custom that goes back to prehistoric times. If people ask me why I have a tattoo, I always ask them back why they don't have one. We all

### EDWARD

FROM PAGE 1

Philippines, Edward Maximo Elenzano has art in his blood. His uncle's paintings and sculpture stirred up his artistic tendency from age 5. While in high school, Edong helped his eldest brother make banners and streamers.

But Edong is the first in his family to pursue art as a profession. (Another relative, however, has since followed Edong's steps. His nephew, Alpog Arao, is also a tattoo artist currently working at Edong's tattoo shop.)

After obtaining a fine arts degree from one of the Philippines' largest universities, Edong traveled to Japan in 1980 to learn the highly skilled art of tattooing. For five years, he worked in a Kanawaga hotel while he took informal lessons from a Japanese tattoo master.

Edong further enhanced his skill by working as an art director for an advertising company in Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

He came to Saipan in 1988 to render perspectives for a now defunct architectural and engineering firm. He has also served for one year as an artist for Hyatt Regency Saipan.

In 1993, he opened Megavision El Drako Tattoo, a Garapan-based tattoo shop visited by both local residents and tourists.

"El Drako," of course, reflects Edong's fascination with the powerful, although mythical dragon—a common symbol of identity for East Asian cultures.

Although his shop takes much of his time, Edong rarely misses opportunities to participate in various tattoo contests. He used to compete a lot, but winning all the time has got him booted out of most competitions, at least as a contender.


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## Group gathers over \$3K for Leyte tragedy

By **MARCONI CALINDAS**  
REPORTER

After more than a month of collecting funds for the mudslide victims in Southern Leyte, the Overseas Filipino Workers Support Group finally turned over the funds to an agency of the Philippine government.

The OFW Support Group remitted the funds through the PNB Foreign Exchange to the dollar account of the National Disaster Coordinating Council, which is under the Philippine Department of Civil Defense.

According to a letter from the OWWA-OFW Support Group addressed to NDCC chair Secretary Avelino J. Cruz, the donation was solicited from the Filipino community in the CNMI in collaboration with the Philippine

Consulate General on Saipan.

The OFW Support Group Philippine held the ceremonial turnover on Wednesday. Support Group Planning Committee officer Dang Bernabe led the handing over of the donation to Consul General Wilfredo DL. Maximo.

"Once more, this is another proof that the Filipinos in the CNMI have always been united, especially in helping their fellow countrymen," said Maximo.

He said the NDCC director has already acknowledged the assistance of the CNMI Filipino community. He said Cruz would soon forward a letter of appreciation from his office.

Aside from donations of Filipino groups and other individuals in the CNMI, a little blue box was placed at the receiving counter of the Overseas Work-

ers Welfare Administration office in the Nauru Building late February to enable the OFWs to donate funds to help the mudslide victims.

In a letter signed by the support group officers, it said, "We are appealing to the generosity of all Filipinos in the CNMI and their friends for support of this project."

Chairs Gabriel De Guzman, Daniel Nicomedes, Mario Aquillo, Ignacio Banadera Jr. Ofelia Lopez, and Tina Marie Alverio signed the letter of request for assistance.

The group said the collection from the fund drive would be used for the purchase of food and other emergency needs of the affected families. The donations would also be used for the food and other needs of the members of the volunteers aid workers, who are extending helping hands to the victims.

"It is usually in times like these that the Filipino people are united in helping one another. Let us therefore unite as a Filipino community and give our share for the emergency and rehabilitation needs of the families affected by this tragedy," reads part of the letter.

The fundraising project was in collaboration with the OWWA office and the Philippine Consulate Office, both located in the Susupe landmark.

### LABOR FRONT

## Barracks or live out?

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
REPORTER

**Q: If an alien worker files a complaint before the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the U.S. Labor, what are the requirements needed for that worker to obtain a memorandum from CNMI Labor to seek temporary employment?**

**A:** The worker must present an original letter on official letterhead from the requesting agency that has been stamped "certified true copy." Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas, in guidelines he issued in December 2004 regarding memoranda to seek temporary employment, stressed that the letter should indicate that the complaint has been made or that the agency requests the issuance of a memorandum on behalf of CNMI Labor.

CNMI Labor will verify the authenticity of the letter presented by the worker by matching it with the original letter or authenticated document submitted directly by the federal or other requesting agency to Labor.

San Nicolas emphasized that CNMI Labor will not honor or accept photocopies, fax copies or any other substitute for an original.

**Q: When should an employer file renewal applications for alien workers?**

**A:** Renewal applications are required to be submitted on or before the last day of the existing permit for the workers. The Labor director would deny any applications filed beyond 30 days. But the employer and the workers may appeal the denial to the Labor Administrative Hearing Office. The hearing administrative officer may either deny or affirm the Labor director's decision to deny the permit renewal application. Most of the time, reversal of Labor director's decision would result to imposition of sanctions against the employer or the employees for negligence.

**Q: If a guest worker prefers to live with a friend, what will happen to his/her housing benefits as provided in the employment contract?**

**A:** Most employers agree to provide housing and food benefits in the employment contract. A worker, however, can rent his or her own housing or live with a friend. If the worker prefers not to live in employer-provided barracks or housing, the employment contract should be amended to state that the worker has chosen to arrange for his or her own housing. The new arrangement about the housing and food benefits between the employer and the worker should be stated in the amended contract.

Submit questions on labor issues to *Saipan Tribune* via e-mail at [editor@saipantribune.com](mailto:editor@saipantribune.com), or by calling 235-6397, 235-2440, or 235-8747 and leaving a message at Ext. 133 or 141. You may also submit questions in person by writing it down and dropping it off at the *Saipan Tribune's* office on the second floor of the Century Insurance Building on Beach Road, Garapan.

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# Arroyo rides Charter change train

By **GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.**  
and **TJ BURGONIO**  
THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

President Macapagal-Arroyo on Thursday put her cards on the table and endorsed the controversial people's initiative to amend the 1987 Constitution.

"The true power of the people is being felt with the signature campaign to change our form of government. The old-time politicians of the status quo better stand back because this train has left the station. It is time for politicians to stand back or get run over," Ms Arroyo said in a speech at the World Bank-sponsored Philippines Development

Forum in Tagaytay City.

The President disclosed her position on the people's initiative even before the Supreme Court could settle the legal questions surrounding the exercise and the Commission on Elections could determine whether the signature drive by Sigaw ng Bayan had complied with the required 12 percent of the total registered voters and 3 percent in each legislative district.

After the President's declaration, her Cabinet and advisers took turns defending the people's initiative after days of denying involvement in it.

In a statement, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said: "It is time for us to

cross the Rubicon.

"We have achieved momentum. Let us not lose it through destructive politics."

Bunye also said that unless the country went through Charter change in order to overhaul its economic and political system, "a cycle of stagnation and degradation will continue to hound us."

## Con-Ass continuing

But Ms Arroyo's move may have been premature because Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said the government could only take part in a people's initiative only after the Comelec shall have validated the results of the signature campaign and

endorsed a plebiscite on Charter change.

Puno also said the move to gather 195 signatures for the House to convene itself into a constituent assembly (Con-Ass) to amend the Constitution would continue. It was Puno who led this campaign as head of Kampi, the President's political party, before he accepted his Cabinet post.

"They are still trying to do that because they believe they can still get the 195 votes anytime now. They also want to avoid constitutional challenges, and they believe the 195 votes will be an easier issue to deal with in the Supreme Court," he said.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya

justified Ms Arroyo's seesawing on her preferred mode of amending the Charter from a constitutional convention, originally, to a constituent assembly last year, to a people's initiative yesterday.

"I think the bottom line is that she wants Charter change in whatever mode," he said.

Andaya also said the government could only provide a budget for the people's initiative if the Comelec orders a plebiscite.

"That is just an opinion of the President, but for us to put in funds for this particular endeavor, we'll have to wait for a positive ruling from the Comelec calling for a plebiscite," he said.

## OWWA seeks help for Tuloy-Aral Project

By **MARCONI CALINDAS**  
REPORTER

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration is calling on all individuals and groups in the CNMI to help children of former Overseas Filipino Workers and other needy children in the Philippines fulfill their dreams of continuing education.

OWWA welfare officer Mary Dait said her office is currently accepting donors to provide assistance to less fortunate children of former OFWs in the Philippines.

Dait said that, through the \$100 sponsorships, the education of the beneficiaries would be smoother and more rewarding.

She said the sponsorship aims to provide the children their school necessities such as notebooks, pens, pads, bags and books, among many others. This year, she said her office is looking at increasing the number of recipients to 20 more students.

"Some 32 schoolchildren have been sponsored by the project since November last year," she said, adding that the target for the next school year is at least 100 students. "We would like to encourage anyone to help former OFWs' children."

There are no requirements to extend help to

the students, said Dait. When an individual has expressed his interest in helping out, the CNMI OWWA office calls the Manila Office so that it could allot a recipient in the Philippines. Then the OWWA office will notify the CNMI office to confirm the sponsorship.

OWWA head administrator Marianito D. Roque said in a letter to prospective sponsors that OWWA launched the project in December 2004 so that children of former OFWs can continue their elementary and high school education in the Philippines.

"The education of our youth being a responsibility of Filipinos here and abroad, may I appeal on our sense of social responsibility as we work together in laying down the foundation of our country's future," Roque said.

Roque said that for only \$100, donors could be a "foster parent of a Tuloy-Aral Kid for one school year.

Last school year, the Tuloy Aral Project in the CNMI ranked No. 1 among OWWA offices in the world. Dait said her office is hoping to maintain that recognition this year.

For more information on how to extend assistance, donors can visit the OWWA office located at the ground floor of the Nauru Building in Susupe.

## Singson to sue Estrada's son for libel

By **NELSON F. FLORES**  
INQUIRER

The lawyers of Ilocos Sur Governor Luis "Chavit" Singson are preparing libel charges against San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito for calling Singson a murderer and a coward at the Sandiganbayan last Wednesday.

In a luncheon meeting with

reporters yesterday, Singson said he saw Ejercito muttering something at him during a break in the trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada, but did not actually hear what the mayor, a son of Estrada, said.

According to Singson, however, an overhead microphone and camera of the GMA 7 television network had caught Ejercito's words and the gover-

nor has instructed his lawyers to secure a copy of the videotape.

"I could see him, it looked like he was saying something to me which I could not hear. I asked, 'What? what?' but we were quite some distance from each other so I could not understand what he was saying. He was outside the courtroom, I was inside," Singson recounted to reporters in Filipino.



### TIGHTENED SECURITY

Filipino police officers and their bomb-sniffing dogs stand in front of a picture of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo at a ferry ship terminal at Manila's south harbor Thursday March 30, 2006. Security has been beefed up around the metro as two explosions occurred in southern Philippines in recent days killing nine people and injuring at least 42 others.

## UP tops bar exams again; House Speaker's niece is No. 1

By **ARMAND N. NOCUM** and  
**LEILA B. SALAVERRIA**  
INQUIRER

Joan A. De Venecia says she wants to change the world.

The University of the Philippines College of Law cum laude has taken the first step toward her goal, topping the list of 1,526 examinees who passed last year's bar examinations, the results of which were released last night by the Supreme Court.

The scion of a politically influential family scored 87.20 percent in the examinations, which saw a record passing rate of 27.2 percent. Two other UP graduates also topped the exams. Three examinees from Ateneo de Manila Law School also landed in the top 10.

The 25-year-old De Venecia is the daughter of former Judge Antonio de Venecia, elder brother of House Speaker Jose de Venecia.

The other top 10 finishers were Jomini Nazareno of the Ateneo de Manila Law School (2nd, 86.40); Sheryl May B. Tanquilut (Ateneo, 85.95); Nyerson Dexter Tito Tualla (Manuel Luis Quezon University, 85.45); Tamsin Rae Lucila (UP, 85.35); Gladys Gervacio (University of Perpetual Help-Rizal, 85.30); Claudine B. Orocio-Isorena (UP, 85.20); Pedro Jose Bernardo (Ateneo, 85.05); Dexter B. Calizar (Philippine Law School, 84.70) and Johnson Ong (Far Eastern University, 84.65).

"I want to change society," said De Venecia in a brief interview with the Inquirer at the Market! Market! mall in Taguig City, where she heard the good news.

Asked if she wanted to enter politics, she said she was naturally inclined to do so. But she quickly added, "My opinions are my own. It's not influenced by my family."

De Venecia is an accomplished debater, having competed in Europe, Australia and the United States. "She's extremely bright," said her proud uncle House Speaker De Venecia.

De Venecia is now employed at the Sycip, Salazar, Hernandez and Gatmaitan Law Office.

Eighth placer Bernardo, who went to the high court to await the results, described the topnotcher as "very driven."

A 2005 valedictorian of Ateneo, Bernardo said he knew De Venecia well because they participated in meetings of law students and were closely watched as likely candidates to top the bar exams.



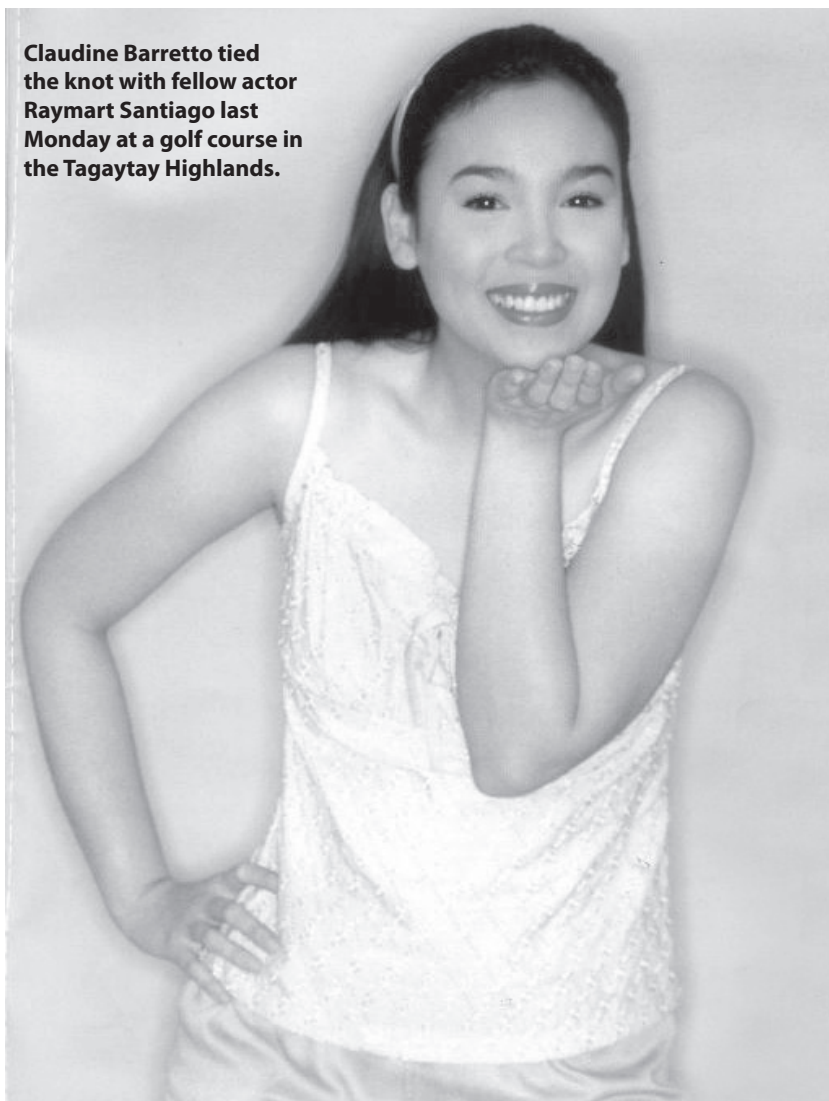
Bar topnotcher  
Joan de Venecia.

JIM GUILLAO/PHILIZAN



# PINOYSTYLE

Claudine Barretto tied the knot with fellow actor Raymart Santiago last Monday at a golf course in the Tagaytay Highlands.



## Wedding halts network wars

By NINI VALERA  
INQUIRER

The network wars stopped momentarily as ABS-CBN star Claudine Barretto and GMA 7 contract artist Raymart Santiago walked down the aisle at the golf course in Tagaytay Highlands on Monday.

Top executives of both networks were paired with each other in the parade of sponsors: ABS-CBN's Gabby Lopez walked with GMA 7's Wilma Galvante; Felipe Gozum with Malu Santos; Charo Santos-Concio with Jimmy Duavit, among others.

But the most applauded duo were Star Magic's Johnny Manahan and Dr. Vicki Belo.

Resplendent in a suit and looking very dignified, Manahan's rare appearance in formal garb amused the stars whose careers he helped shape.

No one, however, could outshine the bride.

Clinging to her father Miguel's arm,

Claudine looked every inch like an ethereal goddess in her gown by Randy Ortiz.

### Magical

These were just some of the magical scenes recounted to Inquirer Entertainment by Star Magic manager Rikka Dylim.

"They got their wish for a solemn wedding," said Dylim, Claudine's longtime friend and talent manager.

A drizzle stalled the ceremony for about 10 minutes. But after the shower, everything else went on smoothly, recounted Dylim.

"The ceremony was short, barely an hour," Dylim added.

Raymart cried when he read his vows. He explained later that his parents Pablo and Cielito Santiago had exchanged vows on the same date 40 years ago.

Claudine also cried when she read her vows, said Dylim.

As if on cue, soft rain fell again shortly after Raymart and Claudine were pronounced man and wife.

### Tent party

The wedding guests partied inside the tents set up near the clubhouse. Main catering was by Gaita Forbes, and Hizon's laid out a dessert buffet that featured a chocolate fountain.

Gary Valenciano sang "The Prayer" during the ceremonies. Kuh Ledesma sang "Evergreen" during the reception. Piolo Pascual sang "My Gift."

Randy Santiago, Raymart's older brother, and Agot Isidro emceed a short program during the reception. The youngest couple and the oldest couple were picked out from among the guests. Willie Revillame and Liz Almora were the youngest couple; a Japanese pair was named oldest couple.

Single men and women participated in a game in which each one ended up with a Timex watch—a reminder that they didn't have all the time in the world to look for partners.

But for Claudine and Raymart, the search was over.

## Ryan C is first judge named for 'Philippine Idol'

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.  
INQUIRER

Award-winning composer Ryan Cayabyab is looking forward to his stint as judge on "Philippine Idol," set to premiere on ABC 5 in July.

Cayabyab is the first to be named out of three who would make up the panel, exactly like the one on "American Idol."

Would he be the local counterpart of "AI's" technical Randy Jackson, the supportive Paula Abdul or the nasty Simon Cowell?

"I'll just be as Filipino as I am," Cayabyab told Inquirer. "I will not imitate anyone."

News of Cayabyab's assignment was relayed by Terra Daffon, senior vice president for Corporate Affairs of ABC 5, which acquired the local license for the wildly popular reality TV series from Fremantle-Media. The two other judges, plus two hosts, will be named shortly, according to Daffon.

### Instructions

Cayabyab said the RP "Idol" producers had given him clear instructions to "retain my personality," and that the only requirement is "to tell the truth to the contestants."

On second thought, since he is a music teacher, he surmised, "I [could] be the 'technical' guy; that's my training."

He might also be something between the effusive Abdul and the cantankerous Cowell.

"I'm sure I'd want to help the contestants improve," Cayabyab explained. "I will definitely push and challenge them. If I can get my message across in a fun way, that would be great."

He finds this very quality in Cowell commendable. "He is so real. His comments are so exact. His gift is that he puts his criticisms in colorful terms."

Overall, he said, everything's up in the air as of now. "I can't predict what I will be or what I will do in front of the cameras. The process may try my patience and turn me into an ogre!"

## Exit Rustom Padilla

By NINI VALERA  
INQUIRER

Free at last was how "Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition" housemate Rustom Padilla described himself a day after he chose to go on voluntary exit from the top-rating show.

"I've got nothing more to prove," he told Inquirer Entertainment on Thursday in an exclusive interview. "I wanted to leave Big Brother's house because I was no longer 100 percent into it."

Rustom stressed that his departure was voluntary and not a forced eviction, as earlier rumored. Neither was it a change of heart, he added.

"I told Big Brother inside the confessional room that my purpose for joining was not about the prizes (P1 million and a condominium unit)," he said. "If so, I would go all the way." From Day 1, he said, his purpose had been to "introduce" himself to the public.

In a dramatic revelation on March 4, the actor admitted to fellow housemate Keanna Reeves that he was gay. He confided to her—and thus to millions of viewers of the reality show—that, as a three-year-old child, he had endured beatings from his father, Roy Padilla, who once caught him in a girl's dress.

Coming out of the closet, according to Rustom, was not his only purpose, either. Even before "PBB," he said, he would tell anybody

who asked that he was gay.

Being gay, however, was only one part of himself, Rustom said, and not his whole being.

"I showed who I really was in the way I worked in the house, dealt with housemates and treated them, to the point that I cooked for them," Rustom explained. "Until last Sunday... [when] I felt that I had nothing more to prove."

After he was nominated for eviction last week, he realized that he was in a competition, he said, and felt that he was no longer appreciated.

"All this time, I thought I was getting along with the other housemates," he said. "But they still nominated me. No, I didn't take the nomination as a personal affront. It just made me realize that we were in here to win a contest."

He rued that his revelation about his sexuality was even questioned as his means to emerge as top housemate.

"So it's best to leave," Rustom said. "Everything I intended to do in the show I have achieved, anyway, and God gave me flying colors. Why should I still want to win? Pride? Vanity? Greed? Deep in my heart, I already won. Being in the show was already a life changing experience [and] I did it."



Rustom Padilla in front of his shop Rusbloom Skin Care after a red carpet grand-launch party on July 24 last year.

Now, about women

He described his coming out of the closet as being freed from bondage.

"Now, I'm experiencing acceptance from people," said Rustom. "I'm happy with my decision. Being gay is not a state of mind; it's your emotional being. I've never had a boyfriend [but] it doesn't mean that I'm not gay. I don't

have to be a screaming faggot to be gay. This is me, and I'm gay."

Do women still turn him on?

"Who knows? I still admire women," said Rustom, laughing. "I admire beautiful women. I like to photograph naked women. If I could paint, I would paint naked women."

As an actor, he said, he has "unfinished" business.

## Stripping for Budoy

By GERARD PAREJA  
INQUIRER

**CEBU CITY**—The night after "Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition" housemate Errol Heracleo "Budoy" Marabiles was nominated for eviction from the reality show, a University of the Philippines-

Cebu Fine Arts professor and six of his students stripped naked during their lounge act Tuesday night in Kahayag Café.

Prof. Raymund Fernandez, one of the founders of Pusod, a non-government pro-artist organization of which Budoy is a member, said they wanted to generate as much support as possible for Budoy because he is the champion of Cebu artists.

Fernandez and colleagues stripped onstage while playing an experimental bluesy-jazz number.

They hoped that news of their activity would bring in text votes for their bet.

### Front man

Budoy is the front man of the seminal cerebral reggae band "Jr. Kilat" and the host of "Esmol Tym," a show on cable television Channel RCTV 36 about small entrepreneurs.

Budoy was a multi-awarded Fine Arts student of UP Cebu. He was active in Pusod's activities before he went serious with his musical career.

As Budoy's recipient group, Pusod will get the counterpart P1 million, should he win the top prize in the reality TV show.

Fernandez is also a father figure in whose house Budoy lived for a while.

Apart from the hope that their little show would generate more text votes for his "surrogate son," Fernandez said exposing themselves was just enough payback, since Budoy had given Pusod a fair amount of nationwide exposure by joining "Pinoy Big Brother."



# Bitoy's toys: Out of the closet

By **MARINEL R. CRUZ**  
INQUIRER

**M**ichael V takes pleasure in each of the many roles he plays.

He is a husband and the father of three kids. He is the host of two top-rating shows on GMA 7 ("Bubble Gang" and "Bitoy's Funniest"). He is a product endorser. He is a sculptor and a sports enthusiast.

During this visit to his three-story home in Quezon City, Michael V, fondly known as Bitoy, plays escort to Inquirer Entertainment, ushering us into rooms where he keeps his favorite things.

One such room on the second floor is what he calls the family work area. It holds the comedian's shoe, bag and hat collections. It also has Bitoy's Macintosh computer and other gadgets. "It pays that we have this kind of room. This is my office," Bitoy says, "and also the kids' homework area."

Displayed in another room, on the third floor, is Bitoy's collection of his favorite DVDs. "Lahat 'yan hindi pirata!" he points out.

Also in here are Bitoy's rare toys, like his Todd McFarlane collection and Darth Vader lightsabers, bought in Japan. "I have action figures, too. The Terminator is my all-time favorite [Arnold] Schwarzenegger character," he says with enthusiasm.

Unfortunately, Bitoy says, his costumes and collection of wigs are stored on the set of "Bubble Gang," in Makati City. He plays female characters in the long-running gag show.

"The trick is to wear something that will make you look like a real woman. In 'Bubble Gang,' we play real women, not gay characters. May pinaggagayahan talaga kaming mga babae. It's

important that the audience believes you're really female."

## Toys

"I'm a collector of Todd McFarlane toys. He's the comic book artist who created the character Spawn. He's one of the finest toy makers around (shows a McFarlane dragon sculpture). Look how detailed this is. Have you ever seen anything like it? Look at the scales! He's really good.

"For a time, I was into model kits. I first assembled the Predator, then Terminator. I'm now into sculpting.

"I have action figures, too. Hell Boy is one of my favorite comic characters. And because I collect Frank Miller's Sin City, I got Marv. I bought Charlie—Johnny Depp's character in the 'Chocolate Factory' movie—because he's my daughter's favorite.

"I'm a big 'Matrix' fan, hence, the Neo, Morpheus and Trinity action figures. I bought 'Smallville' characters for my wife. I also collect anything that's related to Darth Vader, like these lightsabers that I found in Japan."

## DVDs

"I have the complete collection of the 'Matrix' series. 'Terminator' is my favorite FX movie. For me, the 'Wedding Singer' is Adam Sandler's finest movie so far. Jim Carey is at his best in 'Liar! Liar!' Nakakatawa at nakakaiyak at the same time."

## Shoes

"I'm a sneakers guy. Maybe because when I was still young, I couldn't afford them. I own a lot of Nike Free rubber shoes. I think I have a bone spur. It hurts when I walk so I need lightweight footwear. I bought my first pair in Malaysia. After using it several times, my muscles strengthened. Since then, I buy every time Nike markets a new model.

"I don't own a lot of formal footwear. But I make sure I have stuff here

that I could use. I like Wade Shoes. The designs are good and prices are competitive. I own a pair of rubber shoes for each sport I'm into, like badminton, basketball, boxing, tennis and, just recently, golf.

"I also own kung fu shoes (shows his Nike Air Zoom KF) and cycling shoes (black-silver Nike Altea II). I'm not into kung fu or cycling. I just use them for going out. Cross trainers work for almost all kinds of sports. I own a couple of pairs.

"I don't consider myself a collector of shoes. Mahilig lang talaga. I don't wait for a particular model, unlike Antonio Aquitania ("Bubble Gang" mainstay). He doesn't care how much it costs.

"When I buy shoes, I try them on first; that's important. As for the prize, it doesn't really matter if they're inexpensive as long as they're comfortable. Just don't buy pirated wares. Niloloko mo lang ang sarili mo. Buy a nameless pair if you must."

## Caps

"One of these caps was a gift from [novelty singer] April 'Boy' Regino. He was one of my guests on [the now-defunct] 'Celebrity Turns.' I dared him to give the cap he was wearing to me. He's known for handing out locally made baseball caps to his fans. This one, he said he got from a friend abroad.

"Dickies Clothing provides most of my caps. I have with me caps that are not yet released in the local market. One is the prototype of the original Dickies cap released for the Nasdaq recently. I also own a lot of caps featuring my favorite comic book superheroes like The Flash, Green Lantern, Batman and Superman.

## Accessories

"I get my accessories from Charms and Crystals. I don't really believe that

crystals could change the way people live their lives. It's just that I've been looking for the perfect accessories for a long time now.

"I'm really not a collector of watches, but there's this one watch that I got interested in after I saw its ad in a magazine. It's an Omega special Philippine edition watch. Omega came up with only 100 pieces. The magazine I was reading at the time was already two months old. I didn't think I could still find one until I chanced upon a watch shop in Greenhills. I was proud to find out that the one I bought was the first piece of the 100.

"My Technomarine watch was a gift from the director of Joy Ultra, which I endorse. I use this mostly para magpapogi, na hindi ko naman alam kung effective sa akin.

"Before I acquired these timepieces, I was amazed by the technology of Seiko. I bought two Seiko kinetic and auto relay watches. Watches like these are powered by motion. It's a technology that translates every movement of the watch into electricity.

"I got a Luminor watch from my wife's cousin who lives in Japan. They say this is the watch that the Navy Seals use."

## Shirts and pants

"When I find a style that I like, I buy them in all the colors available. The most recent brands that I remember buying were Celio and Giordano. I liked Giordano's slim-fit shirt so I bought five pieces in different colors.

"Dickies Clothing provide most of the shirts and pants I wear on my TV shows. Dickies jeans are very comfortable."

## Bags

"I've always believed that there's one backpack for all my expectations. Because of my search for that ultimate backpack, ang dami ko nang nabili.



Michael V

"Right now, I'm addicted to Hedgren bags. There's this one particular Hedgren that I like because its main compartment is found on the rear side. This is how it should be. Hindi ka na mananakawan. I also like sling bags. They're trendy; they're easy to use.

"I own a laptop bag from Bubble-B. This is a gift from my wife's cousin whom we visited in Japan. When this brand first came out here, it was worth P20,000. Then Rustan's released it for half the price. This is really for electronic equipment like laptops. It's heavy, but sturdy.

"I'm currently using a Columbia backpack. It's so light that it practically weighs nothing. The only weight you'll feel is those of the stuff you put inside."

## Jackets

"This black pack-able jacket is from the brand Columbia. It's so light. Mountain climbers use them. It's made from the materials used for tents. I also bought several pants from Columbia. It's great for travel.

"I fell in love with this Dickies jacket the first time I saw it. I remembered the movie 'Kill Bill.' This is Dickies' best-seller. Aside from the yellow version, I also have it in gray, red and blue.

"I have jackets for when I ride my motorbike. They're from Komine. You should protect yourself when you're riding a bike, kahit sa malapitang byahe lang.

# Piolo Pascual in indie film

By **BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.**  
INQUIRER

More mainstream stars are doing independent movies.

In 2004, Marvin Agustin led the cast of Khavn's "Mondomanila: Institusyon ng Makata (Institute of Poets)," screened in the Cinemania and Jakarta film festivals that same year and in the Rotterdam and Singapore film festivals the year after.

Last year, more stars including Eddie Garcia, Elizabeth Oropesa, Albert Martinez and Jaycee Parker were in Cinemalaya, Cinema One and Cinemania entries and other independent efforts.

Michael de Mesa and Jaclyn Jose, who acted in Cinemalaya productions last year, are starring in Cesar Evangelista Buendia's "Pag-Asa ng Bayan"—a project supported by Jesuit Communications, about planting the seeds of corruption in young students.

This year, Piolo Pascual and Gina Pareño are jumping on the bandwagon.

Piolo Pascual plays a Huk leader in Cesar Hernandez's short feature, "Kagat ng Dilim," which tackles aswang legends used in the psy-war tactics employed by the Central Intelligence

Agency against Filipino subversives in the 1950s.

Joining Pascual in the 14-minute film are Yul Servo, Roeder, Mike Lloren and Jess Evardone.

"Piolo is one of the most cooperative actors I've worked with," Hernandez told Inquirer Entertainment. "My only problem was his busy schedule, but he was thoroughly professional."

Hernandez said he would show it in the campus and film fest circuit.

"A preview is set next month at MyCinema in Greenbelt 3 Makati," he said. "It was sponsored by Fuji Keyser Mercantile and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. I shot the movie using Fuji Eterna 400 film. I just finished post production at Roadrunner; printing will be by Opticolors."

Meanwhile, Sampaguita star Gina Pareño plays the title role in Jeffrey Jeturian's new full-length digital feature, "Kubrador (The Bet Collector)."

MLR Films' lawyer Joji Alonso, executive producer, said it is the role of a lifetime for the veteran actress known mostly for her comedic performances.

"It follows three days in the life of a jueteng collector," said Alonso. "Pareño shines in this movie and she's onscreen 95 percent of the time. Jeffrey



Piolo Pascual

was right... comedians really make good actors."

Pareño is supported by theater thespians Nanding Josef, Soliman Cruz and Fonzy Deza. ABS-CBN director Johnny Manahan portrays a jueteng cashier.

Alonso put together a topnotch crew behind the camera. "Screenplay is by Joel Jover, with Armando 'Bing' Lao as script supervisor. Director of photography is Boy Yniguez and production designer is Leo Abaya."

Alonso said she hopes to field "Kubrador" in festivals abroad.

# 'We simply grew apart'

By **MARINEL R. CRUZ**  
INQUIRER

"There's no third party involved. We simply grew apart. I guess it's because we're of two different worlds," said TV host and commercial model Pia Guanio of her recent breakup with Mike Jacob, her boyfriend of seven years.

Pia is host of programs "Eat... Bulaga!" and "S-Files" on GMA 7, while Mike, younger brother of former swimmer and TV host Christine Jacob, works as a stockbroker.

The normally accommodating Pia tried to dodge entertainment reporters who attended the thanksgiving party of GMA 7's noontime show "Eat Bulaga!" at the Le Pavillon in Pasay City recently.

When she relented, it was just to say, "I thought about it one whole year. I had to make sure [of my decision] because we were together for a long time."

Pia said the relationship had been rocky for a while. "I'd go abroad with the cast of 'Eat... Bulaga!' ...

and never miss Mike. I figured there must be something wrong."

She added: "I'm Miss Quality Control. Hindi pwedeng ganunganun lang. For me, kapag boyfriend mo, dapat mami-miss mo maya't maya."

The TV host, Liana Pia Coronado Guanio in real life, said her family supported her decision.

"My parents are always behind me," she said. "They taught me that no experience is ever wasted."

A source close to Pia said the family never approved of her living with Mike for years now. The source refused to elaborate, except to say the couple last appeared together in a family gathering on Valentine's Day.

As a result of the break-up Pia is now being romantically linked to her "Eat... Bulaga!" cohost Vic Sotto.

When Inquirer sought Vic's comment, the comedian-TV host said in text message: "Not true."

In 2003, Vic admitted going out with a model named Pia Cabrera. Tabloid reports say they're still a couple.



# OPINYON

## Graduating

I haven't felt sad about graduations in a long time. But this year I do. It's not because my son graduated from high school the other Sunday—and graduations are as much an excuse to sing a wistful “Sunrise, Sunset” as they are to bring out the bubbly, while wondering how in God's name your son managed the feat without your ever seeing him study. And it's not because, as the editorials of newspapers almost ritualistically lament, there are few jobs waiting out there for the horde that has just finished college. It's simply that I can't for the life of me see how the graduates can soar to inspired heights today.

Graduation is normally a time for, as Browning says, reaching for things that exceed your grasp, or what's heaven for. It's a time for class valedictorians and graduation speakers to exhort the young, for whom the world stretches into the horizon with its endless possibilities, to be the best that they can be. It's a time when parents remember the dreams and hopes they've had, partly tinged with regret for the things that did not come true, partly brimming with thanksgiving for the blessings that unexpectedly did.

This year, however, we find a world that seems resolutely opposed to all this. If example is the best teacher, then the graduates of today have very little to learn from their parents. This is a country where people are content to reach for things that lie well within their grasp, and still fail to touch them. This is a country where people say beggars cannot be choosers, dreamers belong only to the loony bin, forget about winning medals in swimming, it's all we can do to keep our head above water. Indeed, this is a country where being honest and noble and heroic no longer means anything; while making do with the worst is now everything.

Nothing has brought out to me the stark contrast between what graduation means and what living in this country today does more than the Philippine Military Academy graduation last week. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was the guest in that graduation, which made

the contrast exceptionally dramatic. Clearly, the kids there had more to teach her than she the kids.

The valedictorian of the biggest class in that institution thus far, Ariel Toledo, showed so. He challenged his fellows to live lives of quiet heroism, and he knew whereof he spoke. He himself had done so. He came from impoverished origins, his father dying in 1992 in tragic circumstances and his mother supporting them by selling wares until she too died five years ago. His sisters—“my personal heroes”—spent for his studies by doing odd jobs abroad, and he made sure not a single centavo of what he got was wasted. He studied hard, and rose to the top of his class. Where he is now is as much his sisters' handiwork as his own.

It was “a touching personal speech,” the honored, but not very honorable, guest would say later. But, of course, it was. And if indeed it had touched her, she would even now be moving out of the Palace by the Pasig River out of shame.

The contrast was monumental. Toledo had fought adversity and by dint of hard work had managed to snare the top honors of his favorite school. Arroyo had fought only boredom, which is the lot of someone born with a silver spoon, or into the household of a former President, and by dint of playing safe had managed to snatch the highest position of the land. Toledo had begun low and ended very high up in life, the toast of his fellows, a living example for his community to follow. Arroyo had begun high and ended up very low down in life, the most disliked person in her country, a living example of what public elementary school teachers warn their pupils never to become.

Toledo had spoken of the joys and rewards that come from altruism and self-sacrifice. Though they themselves were as poor as church mice and had to scrounge around for a living, Toledo's



### There's The Rub

By **CONRADO DE QUIROS**  
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

sisters had given freely of what they had to him, for no other reason than that it was the right thing to do. Arroyo has shown only the pain and punishment others have to endure to pay for one's selfishness and self-absorption. Though born to power and wealth, she can't have enough of them, clinging to them at all costs, including the ruination of her country. If she gives freely to the public, all she gives are more people of the likes of Jose Pidal, the Gonzales(z) duo, Ronnie Puno and Mike Defensor, for no other reason than that the public has turned masochist and want more of the same. Or want to “move on” despite being

handcuffed to the bedpost in the company of a dominatrix.

Toledo had spoken of living a quiet heroic life, a life of meeting challenges every day, a life of teaching by deed rather than by word, by example rather than by propaganda. Arroyo has lived only a loud misogynist life, a life of daily fighting off public scorn and calls for her to vacate a post she never won, a life of teaching the worst possible things by example little eased or alleviated by PR. If example is the best teacher, ask yourself what Arroyo, Pidal, the Gonzales(z) duo, Puno and Defensor are teaching the kids.

In the end, Toledo has shown what other true winners before him have shown, which is what winning is all about. Winning is not physical, it is moral: it is a triumph of the spirit. Winning is not external, it is internal: it is felt in the heart. Winning is not about finishing first, it is about being an inspiration to others. It is showing others the best they can be. Winning is not about keeping, it is about sharing; it is not about glory, it is about honor; it is not about leading the pack, it is about picking yourself up after falling down and limping all the way to the finish line.

Well, maybe, graduation this year isn't so sad after all.

## PINOY KASI

## Woman the hunter

By **MICHAEL L. TAN**  
INQUIRER

Can women hunt? I'm sure many readers will reply, “Sure, they can, and they do.” But I suspect, too, that many of you are thinking of women who hunt down men rather than wild animals and that there really isn't that much difference anyway between men and wild pigs.

Seriously, try to imagine a woman going through the forest stalking deer or wild pigs and eventually bringing home game, shot with a bow and arrow.

It does happen, and it is happening right here in the Philippines among some of our Agta groups. The first time this was reported in a journal article back in the early 1980s by anthropologist Agnes Estioko-Griffin, it sparked discussions, first among academicians and eventually captured the public's imagination after Estioko-Griffin wrote up her findings for the magazine *Natural History*. (Yes, Estioko-Griffin is a Filipina. She's an Ilocana, who got her anthropology degree from the University of the Philippines. She's now based in Hawaii, married to another anthropologist, Bion Griffin.)

I'd read Estioko-Griffin's articles on Agta women hunters several times, so I was excited when I heard she was in the Philippines and was scheduled to speak at the 18th International Pacific Prehistory Congress organized by the National Museum and the University of the Philippines' Archaeology Studies Program.

### Video proof

So, last Saturday, I listened not just to Estioko-Griffin, who spoke about Agta women hunters in Palanan town in Isabela province, but also to Thomas Headland, another anthropologist who also found Agta women hunters in Casiguran town in Aurora province.

At the conference, Estioko-Griffin had a special treat for participants in the form of a short video clip, taken more recently, of an Agta woman hunter. The video showed her walking through the

Penabalanca river in Cagayan, amid strong rains. The waters were quite high, but the woman was steady with her gait as she looked for prey. As she crouched, you could tell she had found something. The next scene had her aiming into the bush with her bow and arrow, and then shooting.

The veterinarian in me cringed, but the anthropologist made me continue watching as she went in to get the wild pig. She had apparently killed the pig (I don't know if it was just the arrow, or if she had to do other things to finish off the pig). Before you knew it, she had the pig all trussed and secured on her back. The video clip ended with her making her way back, carrying the pig upriver even as the rains continued.

### Hunters, gatherers

So there, on video, was proof that Agta women can and do hunt on their own. These reports challenge the idea, propagated through many anthropology books, that in hunting-gathering societies, men do the hunting and women forage or gather wild food plants. Often, these accounts are accompanied by explanations that women are not as physically suited as men for hunting, mainly because they get pregnant and have to care for the children.

The reports about Agta women hunters spurred other anthropologists to look for something similar among other groups. So far, the most extensive report about women hunters has been about the Aka group in the Central African Republic. In 2001, the *American Anthropologist* published a report by Andrew Noss and Barry Hewlett about the Aka, as well as their review of theories around women hunters. Noss and Hewlett concluded that women will hunt only if game is abundant, offering more benefits than from food-gathering activities alone.

It should not be surprising that women hunters are so rare now, given the way forests have been depleted in most parts of the world. Besides the availability of game, women will hunt only if they live in a society which is flexible enough with gender norms, allowing them to become hunters if they choose to, and that

includes access to hunting technologies.

It's easy to imagine why, among lowland Filipino groups, you won't find women hunters. In most lowland groups, a young girl would never even imagine the possibility, given the way hunting is clearly defined as a male role. Some areas might even have taboos about women joining the hunt or handling bows and arrows or guns.

Noss and Hewlett emphasize that it's not biological barriers that prevent women from hunting. As shown in Estioko-Griffin's video, women can be very good hunters. I would

infants and children, weighing up to 20 kilos, all day long.

It's all a matter of how society opens up opportunities. We presume women can't (or shouldn't) hunt because then child-rearing responsibilities would be affected. Yet, Estioko-Griffin found that the survival rates of the children of women hunters were not any worse than those of women who didn't hunt. We find similar debates going on today, with societies tending to create so much guilt for women who decide to take up jobs outside the home. Instead of berating women, “How

**It's easy to imagine why, among lowland Filipino groups, you won't find women hunters. In most lowland groups, a young girl would never even imagine the possibility, given the way hunting is clearly defined as a male role. Some areas might even have taboos about women joining the hunt or handling bows and arrows or guns.**

think, too, that women could make better hunters given their patience. Noss and Hewlett also observe that the women hunters are to be found among young and older women, mothers and grandmothers. If child-rearing responsibilities prevent hunting, it's mainly among women who have infants, since carrying an infant around isn't exactly conducive to the silence and stealth needed as they stalk their prey.

### Opportunities, necessity

The accounts of women hunters force us to rethink some of our assumptions about gender. Certainly, we should be thinking twice about our own biases in relation to the physical capabilities of women. We often presume women can't assume certain tasks because they're physically weaker than men, but these assumptions are often flawed, even contradictory. In the Philippines, we often say women shouldn't be lifting heavy objects because “their uterus will drop.” Yet no one questions the way women have to carry around

could you sacrifice your children?” we should be asking, “Why aren't the men doing more to help with caring for the children?”

Different societies have different “space” for women to take up opportunities. I am reminded of an Ilocano woman I met many years back, in a remote part of the mountainous Cordillera region, who, after being widowed, took over her husband's farming duties, and did quite well. With the hard life in the Ilocos, it's not surprising the Ilocanos do allow their women to become more independent and assertive, certainly much more than, say, groups in the Visayas.

Watching the video clip of the Agta woman hunter and remembering the Ilocano widow who farmed reminded me of how very strong women can be. But I couldn't help feeling somewhat depressed as well, knowing that in so many instances, women assume these roles out of necessity. Necessity, they say, is the mother of invention. I'd modify that to say, necessity is the mother of all mothers: women often innovate because they



# SAMU'T SARI



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

### COCKFIGHTS

Dancers demonstrate cockfighting practices in the Philippines as part of activities held during March 19's Family Fun Day for Overseas Filipino Workers in the CNMI. The event drew over a thousand Filipinos and local guests to the American Memorial Park.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

### 'TINIKLING'

Dancers perform the world-famous Tinikling to celebrate the Filipino culture during March 19's Family Fun Day held at the American Memorial Park.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

### BEST COACH

Rufino Aguon, center, of the Samahang Ilocano at Pangasinense team is awarded the Best Coach prize during the 6th Inter-Organizational Basketball League at the Ada Gym in Susupe. Flanking him are UFO president Rolando Pamintuan, left, and Philippine consul general Wilfredo Maximo.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

### MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

Randy Arnedo of the Cabalen team is awarded the Most Valuable Player trophy for the regular season of the 6th Inter-Organizational Basketball League held at the Ada Gym in Susupe.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

### BEST PLAYERS

Dalewyn Cortez of Cabalen inspects his Best Player in Block Shot trophy, while posing for souvenir photo with Brian Flores of SIP, who was awarded the Best in 3-Point Shot trophy, and Philippine consul general Wilfredo Maximo at the conclusion of the 6th Inter-Organizational Basketball League at the Ada Gym in Susupe on March 19.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

### IN APPRECIATION

Cabalen manager Alex Garcia receives a certificate of appreciation from Philippine consul general Wilfredo Maximo at the conclusion of the 6th Inter-Organizational Basketball League at the Ada Gym in Susupe. Second from left is Visminda president Nelly Atalig.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

### IN APPRECIATION

Marie Caamic of the Bayani Association is congratulated by Philippine consul general Wilfredo Maximo, left. In the center is UFO president Rolando Pamintuan. The event was held at the recent conclusion of the 6th Inter-Organizational Basketball League at the Ada Gym in Susupe last March 19.